A Sociological Analysis of the Socio-Economic Status of Female Sales Person Employed in Shopping Complexes:

A Study with Reference to Ranchi City, Jharkhand

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1. State of the Art:

Over the past few decades, India's retail industry has experienced a radical transformation, becoming one of the nation's most vibrant and rapidly evolving sectors. The retail sector makes up around 8% of jobs and more than 10% of India's GDP (Statista, 2022), making it a major contributor to the country's economy. Due to the spread of shopping centres and malls, which provide a wide variety of goods and services to a common people that is becoming more and more focused on consumer goods, this growth has been especially noticeable in urban areas. Among the countless workers who boost this industry, female sales persons have emerged as essential players, contributing significantly to both increasing sales and influencing the customer experience.

The Rise of the Retail Sector in India

From conventional local stores to vast shopping complexes and malls serving a varied and demanding customer, India's retail scene has seen a standard change. Rapid urbanisation, a growing middle class, rising disposable incomes, and changing consumer tastes have all driven this change. Organised retail's arrival has not only changed shopping experiences but also opened many job possibilities, especially for women wanting to join the formal labour.

The growth of the retail industry has been accompanied by a rising awareness of the need for a varied and inclusive labour. Traditionally under-represented in formal employment sectors, women are being included more and more into different roles inside retail stores. Among these positions, sales person has become a notable path for women to work since it provides chances for professional development and financial freedom.

The Role of Female Sales Persons in Shopping Complexes

Female sales persons in shopping malls are given many duties vital to the success of retail operations. Their main responsibilities are after-sales service, sales transactions, product marketing, and customer interaction. Apart from these fundamental tasks, they sometimes represent the brand, reflect the values of the business and improve its image by means of tailored consumer contacts.

Women in sales positions have been shown to have a good impact on consumer behaviour; many consumers say they prefer female sales staff because of qualities including empathy, attentiveness, and strong communication skills. This dynamic emphasises the strategic relevance of female sales persons in building customer loyalty and generating repeat business.

Challenges Faced by Female Sales Persons

Despite their important contributions, female sales persons frequently face a variety of obstacles that can hinder their growth as professionals and general well-being. These difficulties include both workplace-specific problems and more general sociocultural elements that influence their work experiences as a whole.

Workplace Challenges:

1. **Long Working Hours and Physical Strain**: Extended business hours are a defining feature of the retail sector, especially during holidays and busy shopping seasons. Long shifts and standing for the majority of their work are common requirements for female sales persons. Physical exhaustion and related health issues, such as Musculo-skeletal disorders and chronic pain, may result from this.

2. **Job Insecurity and Limited Career Advancement:** A large number of retail sales positions are contractual or temporary in nature, meaning they lack the stability and benefits that come with long-term employment. Limited career advancement opportunities—few female sales persons go on to supervisory or managerial roles—exacerbate this job insecurity.

3. **Safety and Harassment at Work Concerns:** For female sales persons, incidents of workplace harassment, such as verbal abuse and inappropriate behaviour from clients or co-workers, present serious difficulties. The stress that comes with their jobs is further increased by worries about their personal safety, especially when working late shifts or travelling.

4. **Wage Disparities and Absence of Benefits:** In the retail industry, gender-based wage disparities still exist, with female sales persons frequently receiving lower compensation for equivalent work than their male counterparts. Furthermore, there is often little or no access to benefits like paid time off, health insurance, and maternity assistance.

Socio-Cultural Challenges:

1. **Balancing Work and Domestic Responsibilities:** Women are frequently expected to take care of the home and provide care due to societal expectations. Female sales persons face time constraints and elevated stress as a result of juggling the demands of their household responsibilities and professional roles.

2. **Social Stigma and Perception Problems:** Sales positions, especially in retail settings, may be negatively perceived in some communities, which can result in social stigma. Peers and family may criticise or fail to support female sales persons, which can lower their morale and decrease their level of job satisfaction.

3. **Limited Access to Opportunities for Skill Development:** Career advancement depends on ongoing professional development. Nevertheless, female sales persons frequently lack access to skill-building programs and training, which limits their capacity to keep up with emerging technologies and trends in the industry.

The Context of Ranchi City, Jharkhand

The capital of Jharkhand, Ranchi, is a prime example of the swift economic growth and urbanisation that many Indian cities have experienced. With more than a million residents, Ranchi has become a major business centre, as evidenced by the growth of shopping malls and retail establishments. A diverse workforce, including many women, can now find work in the retail industry thanks to the favourable conditions created by this urban growth.

Examining the experiences of female sales persons is made possible by Ranchi's unique socio-economic environment. The employment trends and experiences of women in the retail industry are influenced by the city's economic dynamics, cultural norms, and demographic makeup. Developing focused interventions to raise the socio-economic standing of female sales persons in Ranchi requires an understanding of these regional factors.

Rationale for the Study

Despite the indisputable contributions made by female sales persons to the retail industry, there is a scarcity of thorough research on their socio-economic standing, especially in the context of developing urban areas like Ranchi. There is a knowledge gap regarding the complex experiences of women working in retail positions in smaller urban areas because the majority of previous research has focused on major cities.

By offering a thorough sociological analysis of the socio-economic standing of female sales persons working in Ranchi shopping complexes, the current study seeks to close this gap. This study aims to shed light on the opportunities and difficulties these women encounter by examining variables like income levels, working conditions, career goals, and societal perceptions. It is anticipated that the results will add to the larger conversation about gender and work in India's retail industry by providing information that is both practically and academically relevant.

The study intends to:

• Offer empirical information that can guide the development of policies targeted at enhancing working conditions for women in retail.

• Provide a starting point for research comparing various Indian cities or areas.

• Draw attention to how gender, labour, and urbanisation intersect in tier-2 cities like Ranchi, which are frequently disregarded in studies conducted at the national level.

This exploratory study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the lived experiences of female sales persons by combining quantitative measurements with qualitative narratives. It will investigate the relationships between identity, agency, family dynamics, and socio-economic mobility and retail employment.

Additionally, by highlighting the significance of identifying and resolving the particular difficulties faced by female retail employees, the study aims to promote more inclusive and equitable employment practices within the Indian retail sector.

Scholarly interest in the socio-economic standing of female sales persons in India's retail industry has grown, especially in the fields of urban sociology, labour economics, and gender studies. Retail has become one of the biggest employers in India as the country's economy has steadily moved from agrarian-based jobs to service-oriented industries, accounting for almost 10% of the GDP.

Women's employment in this industry, particularly in customer-facing front-end positions like sales persons, has provided important new insights into how gender, labour rights, and urban livelihoods intersect. In order to place the proposed study on Ranchi's shopping complexes within this larger academic discourse, this literature review will examine the major research contributions in this field.

Women's Employment in India's Retail Sector

The inclusion of women in the Indian retail labour force has been both a function of economic imperative and social change. Goyal et al. (2008) suggest that there has been a noticeable change in patterns of recruitment in retail where women are increasingly sought after for customer service-based positions because of perceived attributes like patience, courtesy, and improved interpersonal communication. Such gendered assumptions do not necessarily equate to fair employment experiences.

Sivasubramanian (2019) made a detailed analysis of women employed in informal textile retail outlets. The research concluded that the women were predominantly semi-literate or educated but unemployed, and came from low-income families. Most of them were pushed into the labour force due to economic necessity, dividing their time between paid work at the workplace and unpaid household chores. The double burden of being wage earners and homemakers exposed these women to severe physical and psychological pressure.

In addition, Bhatia and Soni (2014) pointed out that the feminization of front-end retail jobs is one aspect of a broader neo-liberal restructuring of the urban Indian labour market, in which informalization and contractualization of work have undermined job security and access to benefits, especially for women.

The involvement of women in retail is not just an economic choice but a multifaceted negotiation of socio-cultural expectations. Informal sector—of which retail forms a bulk—is still the main sphere of employment for women and constitutes more than 90% of overall women's employment in India, as revealed by a study by Rani and Unni (2011). In the context of this description, sales roles are 'respectable' jobs, although perceived with patriarchal limitations like mobility controls and social monitoring.

Working Conditions and Gendered Exploitation

A large body of literature highlights the working conditions that female retail workers endure. Mutluri (2021), in her study conducted in Visakhapatnam, described how women working as sales persons in shopping malls suffered from chronic fatigue, back pain, and stress due to long standing hours, unrealistic sales targets, and the emotional labour required to remain courteous to customers at all times.

Sivasubramanian (2019) also reported that many women in retail work 10 to 12 hours a day without any fixed salary, paid leave, or formal contracts. The lack of job security is compounded by the absence of grievance redressal mechanisms, making these women

vulnerable to workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. Suresha (2019), in her research on female textile workers, reinforced these findings by drawing attention to how employers often fail to provide basic facilities such as restrooms or breaks.

Moreover, the informal nature of employment often results in female sales workers not being covered under labour welfare legislations. The unavailability of maternity leave, healthcare benefits, and retirement security forces many women to either exit the workforce prematurely or continue under adverse conditions.

Das and Mishra (2020) in their comparative study of formal and informal female workers found that informal workers not only have fewer rights but also less awareness about those rights. The sense of isolation and helplessness was more pronounced among sales persons in informal retail setups. Many participants in their study were unaware of organizations or helplines that could support them in cases of harassment or wage disputes.

Socio-Economic Constraints and Gender Disparities

The socio-economic status of female sales persons is shaped by a host of interlocking factors, including income disparities, lack of education, absence of social capital, and deep-rooted gender norms. According to Suresha (2019), women in the retail and textile sectors earn significantly less than their male counterparts and face occupational segregation.

Gender-based wage gaps are further intensified by limited mobility and the burden of unpaid domestic responsibilities. As observed by Singh and Vepa (2007), even when women enter the workforce, traditional expectations regarding child-rearing, cooking, and household management persist, leading to what is often termed as the 'double burden'. This phenomenon leads to physical and emotional burnout, restricting women’s ability to pursue career growth or engage in skill-enhancing training programs.

The result is a workforce that is not only underpaid but also under-skilled and overburdened. This inequality perpetuates cycles of poverty and dependence, particularly for women from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The lack of financial autonomy, coupled with patriarchal family structures, often forces women to seek permission for even minor financial decisions, undermining their sense of independence and self-worth.

According to a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), female participation in retail is inversely related to household income, indicating that most women take up such jobs out of necessity rather than choice. This is further supported by NCEUS (2007), which found that female workers in low-wage retail positions often come from families without access to land, stable income, or male earners. "The reports highlight the increasing presence of women in the retail sector within developing nations and address the prevalent issues of informal employment and the lack of social security for these workers. These reports provide a vital global context for this research by underscoring the relevance of examining the working conditions and social protections of Female sales person in Ranchi within the broader trends of informalization and precarity. By contextualizing the experiences of Female sales person within the global trends identified by the ILO, this research can contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by women in the retail sector and inform the development of effective policy interventions."

Urbanization, Migration, and Female Retail Employment

Urban centres like Ranchi are increasingly becoming magnets for rural migrants seeking employment. Women, especially those migrating independently or with families, often find themselves in informal retail roles due to the ease of entry and low skill requirements. However, this transition is fraught with challenges.

Deshingkar and Akter (2009) have emphasized that while migration can be empowering for some women, it often exposes them to exploitative work environments due to the absence of support systems. Migrant women working in retail often live in shared accommodations or slums, commute long distances, and face heightened vulnerabilities such as wage theft, sexual harassment, and health issues.

Additionally, urban life offers limited respite from patriarchal expectations. Studies by Banerjee (2013) and Phadke (2017) show that women's presence in public and semi-public spaces such as malls is constantly monitored and policed, affecting their mental health and restricting their sense of freedom.

Policy Gaps and Institutional Responses

Despite the glaring issues, there remains a lack of comprehensive policy frameworks addressing the specific needs of female sales persons. The implementation of laws such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is weak, especially in informal setups. Most small retailers do not have Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), and awareness about legal rights among workers is minimal.

While schemes such as the Mahila E-Haat and the National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) aim to empower women in urban employment, they often do not reach those employed in informal retail sectors. The lack of unionization and collective bargaining further weakens the negotiating power of female retail workers.

The role of NGOs and civil society has been critical in this context. Organizations such as SEWA (Self Employed Women's Association) have been instrumental in organizing women workers and advocating for their rights. However, their reach remains limited in tier-2 cities like Ranchi, pointing to the need for localized interventions.

Local Sociological Insights from Jharkhand

"Quest Journals' 'Status of Rural Santal Women in Dumka, Jharkhand: A Sociological Perspective' provides sociological information about women from the Jharkhand region, which provides important local context and insights into the sociological factors that may influence the experiences of women in Jharkhand, including those working in the retail sector in Ranchi. This local view provides important context for how the Female sales person may be viewed within the region."

"The Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, provides statistical data and analyses of employment trends in urban India, particularly the growth of the service sector. This data provides essential context for understanding the broader labour market within which Female sales person in Ranchi operate, and can be used to contextualize the research findings. The statistical data can provide a view of the overall employment trends in the region."

"Amity University Jharkhand scholars' research regarding the effect of occupational status on women buying behaviour in Ranchi provides a localized view of the importance of occupational status of women in the Ranchi area, and gives context to the importance of studying the Female sales person. This local information helps to show the importance of the Female sales person within the local economy."

"The Jharkhand Government Department of Labour and Employment/Economic Surveys provide key socio-economic indicators specific to the Jharkhand region, which provides essential background information for understanding the local context of the research and can be used to contextualize the findings. These surveys help to contextualize the economic situation of the Female sales person."

"Research from IJNRD (International Journal of Novel Research and Development) scholars researches the entrepreneurial development of tribal women in Jharkhand, which offers insights into the economic activities of women in the region, providing a broader understanding of the economic landscape within which Female sales person in Ranchi operate. This research provides a wider context for the types of economic opportunities available for woman within the region.

Conclusion

According to the literature reviewed above, the lived experiences of female sales persons in India's retail industry are characterised by a recurring pattern of sociocultural constraints, gendered exploitation, and economic marginalisation. Although retail provides women with a means of engaging in the economy, it does so within a system that is still incredibly exploitative and unequal. The potential for empowerment of such jobs is still being undermined by the disconnect between policy and practice, the informalization of labour, and enduring patriarchal norms. By providing localised insights into the socio-economic status of female sales persons in shopping complexes, the proposed study in Ranchi will add to this expanding body of literature. It seeks to shed light on the micro-level dynamics that influence women's work experiences in semi-urban settings using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. It is anticipated that this study will offer practical suggestions for enhancing working conditions, guaranteeing legal protection, and encouraging socio-economic empowerment for women in retail.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical basis of this research is feminist approach, which provides a critical perspective to understand the gendered character of labour markets, particularly in semi-formal and informal sectors of employment such as retail. Building on the works of scholars such as Sylvia Walby and Nancy Fraser, this framework allows the present research to analyse how social reproduction, care burdens, and traditional gender norms affect women's participation in retail work. It provides the tools to examine why women are often concentrated in low-paying, customer-facing roles with limited upward mobility, and how these patterns are sustained through structural mechanisms like informalization, contractualization, and lack of union representation.

This research applies a multi-dimensional theoretical framework for the analysis of the socio-economic condition of female saleswomen in Ranchi's shopping malls. Fundamentally, a

Marxian approach will be used to study the surplus value concept and how the work of these women adds to the profitability of the retail outlets in conditions of low wages and casual employment. This critique will be combined with a feminist analysis, one that acknowledges the gendered character of work and the particular kinds of exploitation and inequality faced by women workers. Feminist theory will shed light on how patriarchal relations and societal norms facilitate the undervaluation of women's work, which relegates them to a subordinated role in retail.

In addition, the research will refer to the learning of the Hawthorne experiments in order to investigate the influence of company life and social interactions on the health and productivity of female sales representatives. This approach enables consideration of how workplace forces like group cohesiveness, relationships with supervisors, and the work milieu generally affect them, as well as recognizing that these forces are subject to gendered power relations. Lastly, Robert K. Merton's theory of role conflict will be utilized to explain the conflict experienced by these women in reconciling the competing demands of their work and personal lives. A feminist perspective will be employed to specifically explore how societal assumptions regarding women's roles, combined with the nature of retail work, produce special types of role conflict, resulting in possible stress, burnout, and limited career advancement opportunities. By synthesizing these theoretical frames, the research tries to capture a complex and inclusive picture of the socio-economic conditions of women salespersons in Ranchi, unearthing the intersections of economic exploitation, gender injustice, and social dynamics.

The present research provides a multifaceted sociological examination of gendered work in Ranchi's city retail sector by merging these complementary theoretical perspectives. The theoretical framework ensures that the empirical study is well-grounded in critical social theory and not limited to descriptive statistics, thereby enabling meaningful analysis and policy-orientated findings.

2. Problems to be Investigated:

With its numerous shopping centres, Ranchi City's thriving retail scene has seen a notable increase in the number of women working in sales. Although this development represents a change in the urban labour market, it also calls for a critical analysis of the socio-economic conditions that these women face. The current study aims to offer a thorough sociological examination of the difficulties they encounter, going beyond simple observations to a sophisticated comprehension of their actual experiences.

In order to determine the degree of possible exploitation, the current study will examine the particular wage structures that are common in Ranchi's shopping complexes and compare them with regional and national norms. Additionally, it will examine how long work hours affect the physical and mental health of female sales persons, taking into account the possibility of burnout and the interference with personal lives.

Another crucial area of research is job insecurity and the possibility of exploitation. The nature of employment contracts, the frequency of temporary or informal labour, and the degree to which labour laws protect female sales persons will all be investigated in this study. It will also examine cases of discrimination or harassment at work, taking into account the power relationships that might be involved. These difficulties are made worse by the social stigmas connected to their line of work. The study will look into how society views sales work,

especially in relation to gender, and how these views might affect the social interactions and self-esteem of female sales persons. It will also take into account how these stigmas might restrict their chances for career and social mobility.

One of the most important aspects of this research is to elaborate social dynamics that exist in the workplace. The nature of interactions between female sales persons and customers will be examined in this study, taking into account the possibility of both positive and negative experiences. Additionally, the dynamics between the female sales persons themselves will be examined, taking into account the possibility of competition and camaraderie.

The ultimate goal of the current study is to comprehend how these professional factors interact with and impact the personal lives of these female sales persons. It will look at how their jobs affect their relationships with their families, social lives, and general sense of wellbeing. The current study aims to advance knowledge of the difficulties women encounter in the urban labour market and to guide the creation of policies and interventions that support their socio-economic empowerment by offering a thorough sociological analysis of their lived experiences. This research will also attempt to uncover the level of unionization, or the level of knowledge of worker's rights among the Female sales person. A clearer picture of their socio-economic circumstances will result from this.

3. Objectives of the Investigation and Motivation:

The research's motivation stems from a critical examination of Ranchi City's changing urban labour landscape, where the retail industry has greatly expanded the number of female salespeople working in shopping centres. Although this expansion is a sign of economic activity, it also calls for a thorough analysis of the socio-economic conditions these women face. The goal of the current study is to shed light on the complexities of these workers' lived experiences and working conditions by addressing their relative invisibility in sociological discourse.

In particular, this study seeks to go beyond cursory observations by exploring the complex interactions between social stigmas, job insecurity, and wage disparities that influence the lives of female sales persons. It recognises that their experiences are intricately linked to more general concerns of gender, labour, and social stratification in the urban setting rather than being isolated cases of economic vulnerability. By offering a sophisticated sociological analysis, the current study aims to advance knowledge of the difficulties women encounter in the unorganised sector and provide information that can guide the creation of interventions and policies that support their socio-economic empowerment.

The current study also attempts to fill in the knowledge gap about this population's awareness of their own rights and unionisation, which is crucial to comprehending their socio-economic status. A dedication to elevating the voices of these frequently marginalised workers, acknowledging their contributions to the urban economy, and promoting their better well-being is ultimately what motivates this research.

Research Objectives:

1. To analyse the social background of female sales person, including their education, caste, residential status, and marital status.
2. To examine the economic conditions of female sales person, focusing on income levels, job security, financial independence, and purpose of earning.
3. To assess the working conditions of female sales person, with emphasis on mental health, working hours, workplace discrimination, and challenges.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and labour laws in improving the working conditions of female sales person.

4. Research Hypotheses:

A profound concern for the frequently disregarded socio-economic realities of female sales persons employed in Ranchi City's shopping complexes is the driving force behind this study. They are motivated by a desire to share their experiences, advance a more sophisticated knowledge of urban labour dynamics, and provide insight for possible interventions that could enhance their working conditions and general well-being. The current study aims to offer important insights into the intersection of gender, labour, and social stratification within the framework of a rapidly changing Indian city by examining the complex issues they encounter.

1. Female sales persons with less education and from marginalized backgrounds, face more job challenges than others.
2. Female sales persons in Ranchi shopping complexes have lower pay and higher job insecurity than the urban average.
3. Long hours, stress, and discrimination reduce the well-being of female sales persons.
4. Labour laws in Ranchi and Jharkhand do not effectively protect female sales persons at work.

5. Research Design and Methodology:

Research Design:

An exploratory research design is used in this study to examine the socio-economic standing of female sales persons employed by Ranchi city shopping complexes. Given the paucity of quantitative data specifically addressing this group and the need to obtain a basic understanding of their working conditions and lived experiences, an exploratory approach is appropriate. In order to lay the groundwork for further, more thorough research, the main goal is to find patterns, trends, and possible connections between different socio-economic factors and the experiences of these female sales persons. Although quantitative methods form the basis of this study, quasi-participant observation will be used to enhance comprehension of the context in which the quantitative data is situated.

Scientific Method:

The current study employs the scientific method as a methodical approach to social inquiry, starting with the observation of the experiences of female sales persons, developing hypotheses, gathering structured data via surveys, and drawing conclusions supported by data. This procedure contributes to preserving objectivity, minimising bias, and guaranteeing the validity of the study. It's a cyclical process that includes observation, hypothesis development, prediction testing via experimentation or additional observation, result analysis, and conclusion drawing. These findings then either confirm or disprove the original theory, which may raise additional queries and research. In order to reduce bias and guarantee that results are valid and dependable, the scientific method places a strong emphasis on empirical data, logical reasoning, and a sceptical mindset.

I will use the scientific method to conduct a thorough investigation for my thesis, which will focus on the socio-economic standing of female sales persons in Ranchi's shopping complexes. I'll begin by looking at their work before coming up with testable theories regarding things like income and education. Using surveys and interviews, I will test my specific predictions. I'll make sure my research is methodical, impartial, and perceptive by analysing the data gathered and coming to conclusions about their socio-economic realities that are supported by evidence.

Quantitative Data Collection:

The methodical process of obtaining numerical data or information that can be transformed into numbers in order to measure variables and quantify relationships is known as quantitative data collection. This strategy places a strong emphasis on objectivity and the application of standardised techniques, such as closed-ended survey questions, controlled variable experiments, structured observations that involve counting, and the examination of pre-existing numerical datasets. In order to find patterns, trends, and test hypotheses, researchers must first gather quantifiable and statistically analysable data. Eventually, they hope to arrive at conclusions that can be applied to a broader population.

Interview Schedule:

Interviewers use an interview schedule as a structured guide to conduct interviews in a methodical and reliable manner. It usually consists of a pre-planned list of questions or subjects to be discussed, frequently specifying the sequence, precise wording, and guidelines for the interviewer. By ensuring that important topics are covered with every participant, this tool makes it easier to compare responses. The degree of structure can vary, ranging from highly standardised schedules with predetermined questions and answer choices (structured interviews) to more flexible guides with key topics and space for follow-up questions (semi-structured interviews) or even broad topics for unstructured exploration. In the end, the interview schedule acts as a guide for the interviewer, assisting in keeping concentration and obtaining relevant data in a logical way.

To collect quantitative data for this study, a structured interview schedule will be used. This method preserves a structured format for quantitative analysis while providing greater flexibility in probing responses and guaranteeing clarity. The purpose of the interview schedule is to gather quantitative information on a range of socio-economic indicators, such as:

- **Demographic Profile:** Age, marital status, educational attainment (expressed as years of education), place of origin (categorized by urban/rural), and family structure (number of dependents).
- **Employment Details:** Income (precise numerical value), working hours (numerical value), job tenure (numerical value), contract type (coded as permanent, temporary, or contractual), and job satisfaction (measured using a Likert scale converted to numerical values).
- **Living Conditions:** Housing type (categorized and coded), access to basic amenities (measured by a count of available amenities), and ownership of assets (measured by a count of owned assets).
- **Financial Resources:** Income sources (number of sources), savings (numerical value), and access to credit (coded as yes/no).
- **Social and Family Life:** Impact of work on social interactions (measured by frequency of social activities), family relationships (measured by time spent with family), and personal time (numerical value).
- **Workplace Conditions:** perceived workplace safety (measured using a Likert scale converted to numerical values), occurrences of harassment (numerical count), and access to benefits (measured by a count of available benefits).

To aid in quantitative analysis, the interview schedule will include both closed-ended questions with predetermined response options and questions that elicit numerical data. Subjective elements will be measured using Likert scales, and the answers will then be transformed into numerical values for statistical analysis.

Sampling Method:

Purposive sampling will be used because of the exploratory nature of the study and the requirement to target a particular population. Participants who have particular traits related to this research question can be chosen using this method. In this instance, the sample will be made up of female salespeople who work in Ranchi city shopping centres. The shopping complexes will be chosen according to their size, location, and ability to represent the various retail industries in the city. This strategy guarantees that participants from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and workplace settings are included in the sample.

Purposive sampling will be used to choose a representative sample of 200 respondents for the current research study, which is focused on the socio-economic status of female sales persons working in shopping complexes. Based on the goals of the study, participants can be specifically and purposefully chosen using this sampling technique.

Quasi-Participant Observation:

A quasi-participant observation approach will be used to improve the contextual understanding of the quantitative data. This approach entails watching how people interact and work in particular shopping centres without actively taking part in the sales activities.

The researcher will watch:

• Routines and working hours.

• The exchanges between clients and a female sales representative.

• The infrastructure and conditions at work.

• Observed how the female sales person and management interacted.

The quantitative results will be contextualised using this observational data, which will be documented in thorough field notes. It will aid in comprehending the working environment of female sales persons as well as the information gathered. It is crucial to remember that this will not be utilised as a methodology in and of itself; rather, it will be used to contextualise the quantitative data.

6. Sources of Data Collection:

This study, which attempts to understand the socio-economic status of female sales persons in Ranchi's shopping complexes, is based on quasi-participant observation and structured interviews conducted using a carefully planned interview schedule. The primary quantitative data needed for statistical analysis will be obtained through structured interviews with a purposively chosen sample of female sales persons employed by various Ranchi shopping complexes. The meticulously designed interview schedule will serve as the primary data collection tool. Its goal is to extract quantifiable information about the participants' demographics, employment details, living arrangements, financial resources, social and family lives, and working conditions. These interviews will focus on gathering numerical data, including precise figures for income, working hours, and years of education, in addition to coded categorical data for things like contract types and housing conditions. Subjective experiences such as perceived safety and job satisfaction will be measured using Likert scales, which are subsequently converted into numerical values. Interviews will be conducted in private, comfortable settings to ensure participant comfort and candour, and the researcher will directly administer the interview schedule to ensure consistency in data collection. The target population for these interviews will be female sales employees from different Ranchi shopping complexes; they were selected through a purposive sampling technique to reflect the city's varied retail landscape.

- **Structured Interviews:** Instead of semi-structured interviews, structured interviews will be conducted. This will involve using a pre-determined set of questions asked in a standardized order to all participants. This will ensure consistency and comparability of data.

- **Quasi-Participant Observation:** This method involves observing the working environment while maintaining a degree of detachment. The researcher will observe and record interactions, behaviours, and working conditions in shopping complexes without fully immersing themselves as a participant. The researcher will observe the Female sales person' interactions with customers, managers, and another Female sales person. Observations will be recorded in a field notebook.

The primary foundation for quantitative analysis will be the information gathered from the interview schedules, which will enable the use of statistical tools to find trends and connections. In contrast, the quantitative findings will be supported and interpreted by the observational data, offering a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the research problem. By combining data sources, the research findings will be more valid and reliable and provide a more comprehensive and richer picture of the socio-economic realities faced by female sales persons in Ranchi's shopping complexes.

Furthermore, because it offers a quick and affordable method of accessing pre-existing data for analysis, secondary data is extremely valuable in research. It guarantees credibility and dependability by enabling researchers to use data gathered by organisations, government agencies, and research institutions. Without the need for intensive primary data collection, secondary data facilitates deeper insights and broader generalisations by facilitating trend analysis, comparative research, and hypothesis testing. It is especially helpful for researching economic trends, social behaviours, and historical patterns. Secondary data is still a crucial tool for thorough research and well-informed decision-making, despite certain drawbacks. To give background information and bolster the research findings, existing documents—such as labour laws, policy reports, and pertinent studies—will be examined.

7. Selection of Field:

Ranchi city, which is the capital of Jharkhand, offers a distinctively engaging study area for the suggested study of the socio-economic status of Female sales person employed in shopping complexes. Its suitability is due to a combination of circumstances, such as its fast pace of urbanization, changing retail environment, and socio-economic imbalances that are widespread in the region, which altogether provide an environment conducive to sociological inquiry. Ranchi is undergoing rapid urbanization, which is characterized by a high volume of migrants coming from rural Jharkhand and neighbouring states in search of jobs. Based on the Census of India 2011, Ranchi district, with a population of 2,914,253, had a growth rate of nearly 23.39% over the last ten years, showing a large growth in its urban population. This influx has driven the expansion of the retail industry, with the spread of shopping malls and complexes becoming a salient feature of the city's transforming landscape. This sudden surge in the retail industry, and the resultant need for sales staff, makes Ranchi a suitable place to observe the changing dynamics of women's labour in this sector. It should be noted that the city population of Ranchi district, according to the 2011 census, represented a large part of the overall population, highlighting the trend towards urbanization.

The retail market in Ranchi is dominated by a combination of organized and unorganized employment, providing a variety of working environments for Female sales person. They are working in newly opened shopping malls and shopping complexes, while others find employment in small, informal retail shops. Such variation creates scope for analysis of the differences in working conditions, earning levels, and security of jobs across various sections of the retailing industry. In addition, the relatively low rate of women's labour force participation in Jharkhand, compared to country averages, also makes the exploration of women's work in a developing industry such as retail very important. Female labour force participation rates in Jharkhand are frequently below those of a large number of other Indian

states, as revealed by the data from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). Also, the female literacy rate in Ranchi district, according to the 2011 census, was 76.06%, which points to the educational environment under which these women work in the labour market.

Ranchi and Jharkhand as a whole are marked by high socio-economic inequalities. Jharkhand has a high poverty level, with a large percentage of the population living below the poverty line, according to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5). These inequalities usually mean that women, especially those working in the informal or semi-formal sector such as in retail, face vulnerable working environments. The study can help understand how these larger socio-economic inequalities impact the life and working environment of Female sales person in Ranchi. Particularly, the study can investigate how education level, access to resources, and background of family contribute to their socio-economic status in the retail workforce. The 2011 census data also shows that a large percentage of the population lives in rural regions, and move to urban regions in search of work.

•**Retail Growth in Ranchi:** Between January and September 2023, major brands like H&M, Marks & Spencer, Max, and Home-Centre opened stores in Ranchi. This growth is a demonstration of the city's increasing attractiveness to major retailers and an increase in consumer demand.

•**State Economic Growth:** Jharkhand's economy has exhibited growth and resilience, with a forecasted increase in GDP by 7.7% during the fiscal year 2024-25. This economic boom is expected to have a positive effect on consumer expenditure and retail business performance, including in Ranchi.

Sampling: The present research study i.e. Socio-Economic Status of Female sales person Working in Shopping Complexes, purposive sampling will be utilized to choose a representative sample consisting of 200 respondents. Such a sampling design enables the research to select the participants deliberately and specifically in response to the aims of the study. The sample will be taken from four different wards i.e. Ward- 15 (Main Road Area), Ward- 1 (Kanke Area), Ward - 18 (Lalpur Area), and Ward- 17 (Dangratoli Area) and of Ranchi Municipal Corporation, and 50 respondents from each ward will be chosen. This approach ensures a well-distributed and diverse representation of the urban population, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of the research topic within the specific context of Ranchi. By employing purposive sampling, the study aims to capture a range of perspectives and experiences that can contribute to the present research.

The relative scarcity of prior research on the particular socio-economic circumstances of Female sales person in Ranchi makes this study highly relevant and opportune. Though research has been done on retail labour and gendered work, there has been a lack of quantitative data specifically on this particular group within the context of Ranchi. This study will bridge this gap by presenting empirical evidence regarding working conditions, earnings levels, and socio-economic backgrounds of Female sales person in the city. Lastly, Ranchi as an emerging urban centre in an economically transitioned state enables an interesting investigation into the interaction between gender, labour, and urban development. The conclusions of the research will not only increase the understanding of the socio-economic conditions of Female sales person in Ranchi but will also be important information for policymakers and labour unions looking to enhance working conditions and gender equality in the region. The information generated can subsequently be utilized to develop policy that can be applied to the region

directly. In short, Ranchi's high rate of urbanization, diversified retail landscape, socio-economic inequality, and relative paucity of existing literature render it a very apt and interesting research setting for the present study. The study can yield important insights into the lives and working conditions of Female sales person in the city and advance our understanding of labour dynamics in the retail industry in developing urban environments.

8. Analysis of data

Data analysis in the current study will be largely based on quantitative methods, complemented by qualitative information obtained through quasi-participant observation. A structured interview schedule will be used to collect data, which will pick up the major socio-economic indicators of Female sales person employed in shopping complexes in Ranchi city. Responses collected will be organized and analysed systematically using Microsoft Excel, which will be the main tool for data entry, coding, tabulation, and statistical analysis.

After the data is gathered, it will be entered into Excel spreadsheets with great care, followed by data cleaning processes to correct any inconsistencies, errors, or missing values. Variables will be coded in a proper manner to ensure easy analysis, for example, transforming categorical responses into numerical codes for easy computation.

Descriptive statistics will be utilized to present the demographic and socio-economic profiles of the respondents. This involves computing frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency like mean, median, and mode. These summaries will assist in comprehending the general distribution and nature of the data. For examining relationships between variables, cross-tabulation will be utilized. This will enable comparison across categories, for example, income level by age group, education by job satisfaction, or working hours by health conditions. Bar charts, pie charts, and histograms will be created in Excel to display key patterns and trends.

Also, qualitative information collected via quasi-participant observation will be utilized to enhance the meaning of the quantitative results. These observations will illuminate workplace environments, interpersonal relationships, and lived experiences of Female sales person that cannot be captured in full by structured questions. For example, observed behaviour and casual interactions within the shopping malls can be used to illuminate patterns of job satisfaction or reported levels of stress in the interview questionnaire. Where appropriate, composite variables will be created in Excel—such as a socio-economic index—by aggregating markers such as income, education, length of working hours, and entitlements to welfare benefits. The index will offer a synthetic estimate of the participants' socio-economic position. To ensure robustness, the observational data will be triangulated with the interview responses, facilitating the detection of consistencies or inconsistencies between reported and observed conditions. Although the main analysis is quantitative, these qualitative inputs will facilitate contextual anchoring and enrich the findings.

Statistical using spreadsheet software like Microsoft Excel will be used for data entry and initial analysis. Field notes from quasi-participant observation will be thematically analysed to determine relevant patterns and insights. The quantitative analysis findings will be reported in tables, graphs, and charts to enable easy communication, with the interpretation of these findings based on statistical and practical significance. The contextual information derived

from the quasi-participant observation will be incorporated in the finding's discussion, giving the complete and detailed picture of the socio-economic condition of Female sales person in the shopping complexes of Ranchi.

9. Significance of the Study:

The current study has high relevance, combining scholarly depth and real-world applicability to explore a key but frequently neglected dimension of India's urban labour scene. Through an examination of the socio-economic status of Female sales person employed in Ranchi City's shopping complexes, the research bridges a significant gap in current literature. This population, crucial to the city's commerce, is all but invisible from concentrated sociological research, and thus their challenges and experiences remain hidden. Learning about their lives is essential in order to get a complete understanding of urban labour market dynamics within India, especially as cities like Ranchi change so quickly. Additionally, this research goes beyond purely theoretical intentions, providing the basis for real-world interventions. The evidence produced will provide an invaluable input to policymakers, employers, and civil society groups. By shedding light on the working conditions, economic risks, and social stigma experienced by these female sales persons, the research can inform policy and program design and implementation that is tailored. These efforts can be anything from enhancing enforcement of labour laws and promoting fair employment practices to creating access to necessary social support services to end up with improving the overall well-being of this marginalized group of workers.

In addition, this study contributes to an overall understanding of gendered labour inequalities in the service sector. Through an analysis of the complex intersection of gender, class, and place, the research sheds light on the structural inequalities that condition women's lives in the modern workforce. This analysis can be used to inform advocacy work seeking to advance gender equality and empower women, not only in Ranchi, but in other similar urban environments in India. Moreover, the emphasis of the study on assessing the effectiveness of current labour policies and legislation is informative for developing regulatory frameworks. Through the analysis of gaps between policy intention and actual practice, the research can feed into advice for enhancing labour protection and making workers' rights a reality. Additionally, the research's analysis of how urban migration affects the lives of such Female sales person enhances an understanding of the problems and prospects linked to internal migration in India's growing urban hubs. This can guide policies and programs to help migrant workers and ease their incorporation into urban labour markets, an important issue for developing nations.

Lastly, and most significantly, this study is a forum for giving a voice to an oppressed and long-silenced population. In sharing their voices, the research facilitates social justice and brings attention to the actualities of their lives. It makes sure that their experiences and opinions are heard, recognized, and comprehended and thus adds to an inclusive and just society. This social justice commitment reinforces the moral obligation of this research, which seeks not only to add to academic knowledge but also to impact positive social change. Essentially, the current research is important as it will add to academic knowledge, inform policy, advance social justice, and provide insight into the realities of a vulnerable group, leading to a more educated and equitable society.

10. Relevance to Present Day Problems and Needs of the Society:

The current study is deeply pertinent to the contemporary Indian socio-economic context, tackling a number of seemingly intractable challenges that have an urgent need for consideration. The accelerated growth of the service industry, especially in urban areas such as Ranchi, has resulted in an increased rise in the numbers of women in frontline working positions. Yet this increase has not always been reflected in their better working conditions or overall social welfare as workers. In a society that is faced with endemic gender disparities and labour exploitation, an understanding of Female sales person socio-economic status is central to informing effective strategies geared towards inclusive and equitable development. The study hence squarely addresses the challenges presented by the changing dynamics of urban work, especially with regards to marginalized groups, and aims to make contributions that will inform effective interventions. In addition, the worsening of pre-existing vulnerabilities in the informal and semi-formal labour markets, fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlights the relevance of the current study.

Female sales persons, who work often in insecure employment conditions, have been exposed to increased threats of losing their jobs, their earnings being cut, and their exposure to health risks. This study offers an important perspective through which to analyse their resilience, coping strategies, and the imperative for strong social safety nets and improved labour protections.

The ongoing debate about labour law reforms and the need for strengthened enforcement mechanisms further raises the importance of this research. Through critical assessment of the effectiveness of current policies and the loopholes in their enforcement, the research adds to evidence-based policy-making and advocacy efforts geared towards enhancing workers' rights and their conditions of work. Furthermore, the rising trend of urbanization and intra-national migration in India has led to the emergence of a diverse city labour force, predominantly involving marginalized social groups of workers. The research here throws light upon intersectionality among social identities and its extensive influence upon socio-economic standing, helping better grasp challenges surrounding migrant labour and other marginalized populations. Moreover, the increased recognition of mental health problems within the workplace makes the focus of the study on the mental wellbeing of Female sales person especially appropriate. Through investigation of the effects of working conditions on their mental wellbeing, the research can be used to develop specific workplace interventions and support systems, tackling an important but hitherto largely neglected dimension of worker wellbeing.

Lastly, in a gender-equal and woman-emancipated society, this study offers a critical platform to give voice to a silenced and neglected section of women workers. Through the discussion of their challenges and experiences, the study aims to raise awareness and facilitate social justice. This study thus fulfils the critical need to learn about and enhance the lives of women workers in the changing Indian labour market. By providing a voice to a segment of society that must be heard, it is an important step towards a fairer and more equitable society.

11. Contribution to the Existing Knowledge:

The current research aims to appreciably expand the available amount of knowledge through providing a methodically focused and quantitatively stringent analysis of the socio-economic condition of Female sales person functioning in the swiftly changing retail marketplace of Ranchi city, Jharkhand. Although there have been scholarly investigations of labour dynamics in the retail sector, as well as specifically gendered employment, there remains a specific lack in the quantitative understanding of the particular socio-economic conditions faced by Female sales person in this specific city setting. This study aims to narrow this gap through a detailed data-based portrait of this frequently disregarded workforce that goes beyond such anecdotal narratives to create statistically informed knowledge regarding their lives.

Using structured interviews combined with advanced statistical analysis, this study will provide quantitative data on the Female sales person's demographic features, income levels, conditions of work, and access to resources. This will be done in a way that will add to the precise and accurate picture of their socio-economic status and will yield empirical data that can be used to formulate interventions that are specifically targeted. In particular, by measuring the impact of variables like job tenure, type of contract, and level of education on earnings and job satisfaction, the current study will provide useful, practical insights. Additionally, this study will add to an enhanced comprehension of the gendered dynamics of work in the growing retail industry in a developing urban environment. By concentrating on the particular issues which confront the female sales force, it will shed light upon how gender combines with socio-economic factors to condition their working lives. The quantitative analysis will give us empirical evidence of the possible vulnerabilities of this workforce, such as low pay, job uncertainty, and harassment at the workplace, evidence that will be important for informing policies that seek to advance gender equality and better working conditions in the retail industry.

In addition, the use of quasi-participant observation, in combination with the quantitative data from interviews, will give a richer and contextualized picture of the research issue. Although mainly quantitative, the current research recognizes the value of qualitative information in enhancing the interpretation of statistical results. The observational data will shed light on the everyday realities of the Female sales person' working life, giving useful context to the quantitative analysis. This blending of approaches will add to a more detailed and richer understanding of the socio-economic forces that shape their lives, providing a more detailed and richer picture than either approach could achieve in isolation. Lastly, this study will provide a foundation for further research on labour in the retail industry in developing urban environments. The quantitative information produced by the current study can be utilized in informing the conceptualization of more advanced study designs and methods. Additionally, findings can be utilized in informing policy interventions for enhancing the livelihood of Female sales person and ensuring sustainable development in the retail industry. By focusing on the specific context of Ranchi, this research will contribute to a more localized and contextually relevant understanding of labour dynamics in the retail sector, offering insights that are directly applicable to the region.

12. Future Work:

The current study, in providing a holistic analysis of the socio-economic condition of Female sales person in Ranchi, naturally leaves open a range of possibilities for future research and practical interventions. The results and methods used here can provide a solid basis for a wide range of future projects. Of particular interest, longitudinal studies could be undertaken to map the long-term effects of retail sector work on the socio-economic paths of these women, analysing career advancement, income mobility, and the long-term effects of working conditions on their general well-being. Comparative studies in other Tier-II and Tier-III cities in India would also give a wider picture of regional differences in labour conditions and the role of socio-cultural factors in influencing women's employment. Future studies could explore particular dimensions of the Female sales person' experiences, such as the revolutionary impact of technology and e-commerce on their work, or the effectiveness of workplace interventions aimed at improving mental health. Research into the role of trade unions and workers' organizations in protecting the rights and improving the conditions of Female sales person would also be rich in insights into the possibilities of collective action and advocacy. The empirical implications of the current study reach into the design and assessment of focused training interventions and support services in areas of skills acquisition, economic literacy, and awareness of labour rights. In addition, this study can serve as a catalyst for policy change advocacy, emphasizing the need for enhanced labour protection and social welfare protection for retail sector women workers. The information gathered can prove to be highly useful in framing policy advice and working with policymakers and employers in order to drive meaningful change. Moreover, qualitative research, utilizing narrative and ethnographic methods, might investigate Female sales person's lived experiences more deeply, enriching understanding of their views and issues. In a nutshell, the current study provides a launching pad for future research and action and adds to a more holistic and nuanced picture of the socio-economic status of women workers in India and informing collective efforts to enhance their lives. This study builds a foundation for action, and subsequent studies that will enable a higher degree of change to take place.

Tentative Chapterization:

1. Introduction
2. Review of The Literature
3. Area of Study and Research Methodology
4. A Socio-Economic Status of Female Sales Person Working in Shopping Complexes
5. Data Interpretation and Analysis
6. Conclusion and Suggestion

Bibliography

Annexure

Schedules

Photographs

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